



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# VA FIGHTS AGAINST VETERAN IDENTITY THEFT

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it has launched a new campaign to educate veterans about identity theft prevention. The new campaign, titled *More Than a Number*, references the personally identifiable information that the VA encourages veterans to protect.

The VA's Office of Information and Technology recently announced the launch of a new website containing identity theft resources for veterans and their beneficiaries. The website can be found at [www.va.gov/identitytheft](http://www.va.gov/identitytheft) and features educational information, interactive multimedia and links to other online identity theft prevention resources. The campaign also includes a toll-free help line offering support for veterans, their beneficiaries and VA employees who have questions and concerns about identity theft. The toll-free number is 1-855-578-5492, and it will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., EST.

In defending against identity theft, the VA understands that awareness is critical. With *More Than a Number*, the VA aims to educate veterans on the risk of identity theft and how to avoid becoming a victim.

The VA takes seriously its obligation to properly safeguard any personal information within its possession and has in place a strong multi-layered defense to combat evolving cyber security threats. The VA is committed to protecting veteran information, continuing its efforts to strengthen information security and putting in place the technology and processes to ensure that veteran data at the VA is secure.

In the event of a loss of VA data, the VA has safeguards in place to protect against identity fraud. Acting out of an abundance of caution, the VA's standard practice is to provide free credit protection service enrollment, monitoring services and reports, fraudulent charge alerts, and fraud resolution and identity theft insurance to individuals affected by a VA data breach with a reasonable risk for the potential misuse of any sensitive personal information.

For additional information on identity theft, visit [www.va.gov/identitytheft](http://www.va.gov/identitytheft) or contact the VA Identity Safety Service at [vaidtheft@va.gov](mailto:vaidtheft@va.gov).

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Heroes Among Us—  
showcasing 125 South Dakota  
veterans.



## MILITARY YOUTH LEARN ARMY VALUES AT LEADERSHIP CAMP

One hundred twenty military youth and 12 junior counselors from across South Dakota came together for the 2014 South Dakota National Guard Military Youth Camp, July 21-25, at Storm Mountain Retreat Center near Rapid City.

Targeted specifically toward youth ages 9-11 who come from military families, the camp offered kids a chance to learn military values and leadership, while connecting with others like themselves.

The camp's theme was *Star Search!*, so campers spent a lot of time learning about space, stars and the constellations at the secluded campground.

They also learned the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

On top of that, they experienced leadership challenges and nature hikes, visited the MJF State Veteran's Home in Hot Springs, swam at Evan's Plunge and sang military cadences on stage at the Mount Rushmore lighting ceremony.

The next camp, *Explore!*, is set for Aug. 11-15 and is designed for military youth in the 12-14 age group. The campers will be able to pursue one of four military tracks (aviation, law enforcement, survival skills or medical) while also learning about Army values and leadership qualities.

South Dakota Military Youth Leadership Camps are conducted in partnership with the South Dakota National Guard Child and Youth Program and Operation Military Kids, a Department of Defense grant-funded program.

To get involved with either camp, contact Taryn Broomfield, South Dakota National Guard Lead Child and Youth Program Coordinator, at (605) 737-6019 or [taryn.m.broomfield.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:taryn.m.broomfield.ctr@mail.mil).





## ZIMMERMAN WELCOMES BIKERS TO FREEDOM RIDE

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman was on hand last Sunday to greet the bikers participating in Hot Springs's annual Freedom Ride. Normally the registration and send off for this event are held at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, but with the various construction projects taking place on campus, the gathering for the riders was downtown, near the traveling Vietnam Wall Memorial.

92 riders donned their leather and took to the highways.

Residents from the MJF State Veterans Home participated in the parade, touring the traveling Vietnam Veterans memorial and attended the veterans



appreciation supper that evening. Photos provided by Curt Nettinga (Hot Springs Star)



## ZIMMERMAN TO TESTIFY AT HOUSE HEARING

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman has been asked to testify at the U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing on Thursday, August 14, in Hot Springs. The focus of the hearing is the proposed restructuring of the VA Black Hills Health Care System in Hot Springs.

The hearing will include testimony from:

- Bryan Brewer, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe;
- Bob Nelson, co-chair of the Save the VA Committee;
- Amanda Campbell, member of the Save the VA Committee;
- Pat Russell, co-chair of the Save the VA Committee;
- Larry Zimmerman, South Dakota Secretary of Veterans Affairs

The hearing will be held at 10:00 a.m. (MT) on Thursday, August 14, at the Mueller Center in Hot Springs, SD.

## VA SECRETARY MCDONALD ANNOUNCES TOWN HALL EVENTS

Secretary of U. S. Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald has directed all Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare and benefits facilities to hold town-hall events by the end of September to improve communication with, and hear directly from, veterans nationwide.

"Caring for veterans is a calling, and our first commitment is to provide veterans and their families the timely, quality care and benefits they have earned and deserve through their service to our Nation," said Secretary McDonald. "As we seek continual improvement and to rebuild trust among veterans, it is critical that we continue to listen and learn directly from those who use our system."

Secretary McDonald has informed the Under Secretaries of Health and Benefits that each VA medical center and regional office should hold at least one town-hall meeting with veterans between now and the end of September. Meetings are designed to allow feedback from veterans, family members and other beneficiaries. Each facility will also welcome input from Congressional stakeholders, veteran service organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other community partners. Details of events in each location will be forthcoming from local facilities.



## SDDVA STAFF HOST BOOTH AT SIOUX FALLS JOB FAIR

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs was one of over 100 vendors at the Sioux Falls Job Fair held at the Elmen Center at Augustana College Wednesday.

Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Field Officer Steven Lund and Veterans Service Officer Regina Boeve were on hand to answer questions regarding veterans benefits and services.

Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether kicked off the event by reading a proclamation proclaiming Wednesday, August 6, as *Veterans and Spouses Job Fair Day* in Sioux Falls.

This is the eighth annual job fair offered to assist veterans, military personnel readjust to their civilian life.

Recently, SDDVA provided all CTVSOs with the book "Deployment to Employment," a guide for military veterans transitioning to civilian employment. The book provides a step-by-step guide to success in landing civilian employment. SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman believes that the book is a great resource for veterans to use in developing their resume, preparing for interviews and landing a job.





## HEROES AMONG US

Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard and Ellsworth Air Force Base were among the hundreds gathered at the Sturgis Community Center for the annual Military Appreciation Day, Aug. 5, 2014, during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

The City of Sturgis, along with the SDNG and Ellsworth AFB, spearhead the annual event that pays tribute to a decorated war veteran.

Following a proclamation from Sturgis Mayor Mark Carstensen declaring the day DeWayne Hayes Day, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Jim Welch, senior enlisted leader, presented Hayes, a U.S. Air Force Korean War veteran, a coin of excellence for his service to the nation.

Next, Col. Ty Neuman, vice commander of the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth AFB, and Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Peterson presented

Hayes, of Sturgis, with an American flag flown over Afghanistan in a B-1 Bomber on July 4, 2014.

Staff Sgt. Hayes, 84, served at Kimbo Air Force Base in Korea from 1950-1954 where he was assigned to the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group Intelligence as a target controller.

Thank you DeWayne for your service to this great country.



## HEROES AMONG US

One of South Dakota's fallen heroes was honored at the annual Military Appreciation Day in Sturgis and thanks to a non-profit organization, long lost awards were presented to family members.

Second Lt. Harry William Bessler, a Black Hills resident, was a B-24 Liberator bomber pilot sent to Italy on Dec. 15, 1943. Just one month later, his plane was damaged during a bombing mission south of Rome and crashed.

After missing in action for more than one year, on May 18, 1945, Bessler was pronounced dead. Years later his remains would be recovered from the plane's cockpit.

His wife was presented his Purple Heart, but the award, along with his other medals, were lost in a house fire following her death.

Capt. Zachariah Fike, of the Vermont Army National Guard and founder of Purple Hearts Reunited, a non-profit organization that locates lost or stolen military medals and returns them to veterans or their families, then presented Bessler's reclaimed medals to his nephew, Tom Maples, of Rapid City, along with a framed flag and a portrait of Bessler.

"I was only three years old when my uncle died," Maples said to the crowd of supporters. "I never really got to know him, but through stories and such, he was always my hero. Now I can share this with everybody and prove he definitely was a hero."

Our sincere thanks to the Bessler family for their sacrifice.

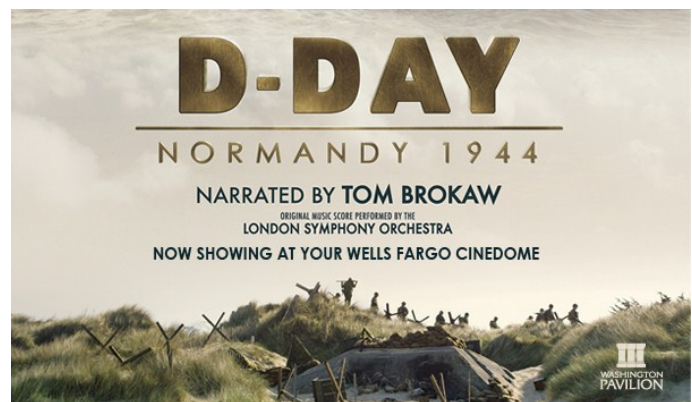
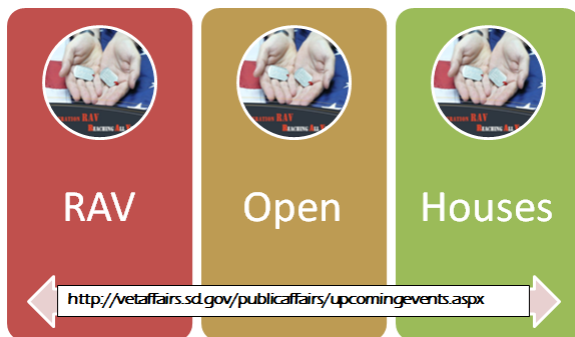




# Upcoming Events

## 2014

Aug. 20—Annual SFVAHCS Show and Shine  
Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux City, IA  
Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre  
Aug. 30— 727th DAV 10th Annual Charity Poker Run—Brookings—10:00 am  
Sept. 11—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Wagner  
Sept. 19—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux Falls  
Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



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